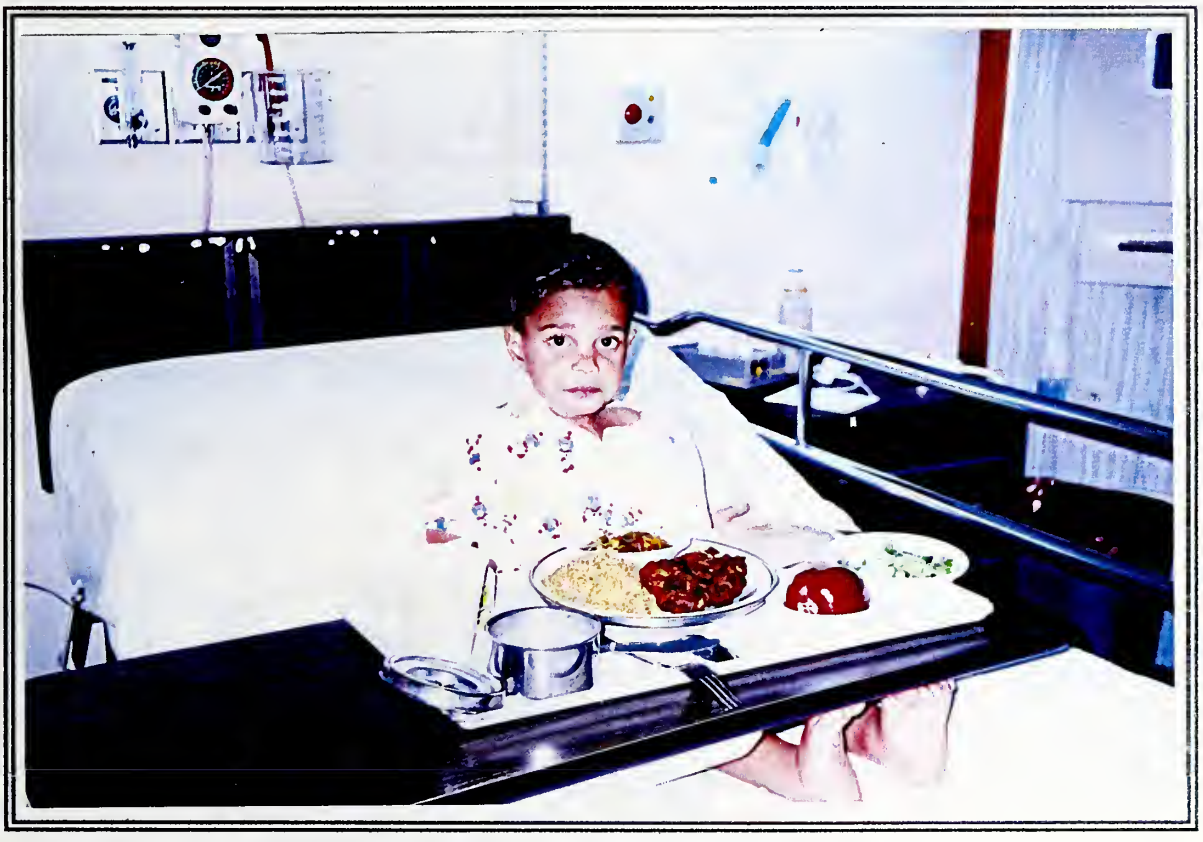
MEAL SERVICE CARE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND CHILDREN AT HOSPITALS



Written By: Towfik Bellow

Edited By: Colin E. Ogle & G. Shocklee

DATE :May 19, 1995

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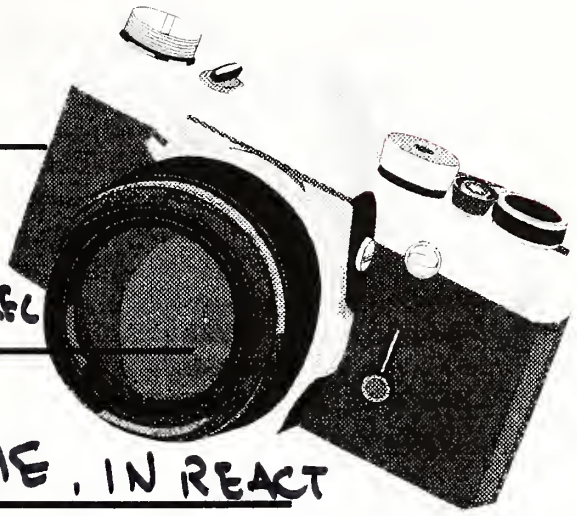

MRS. JUNE. MORRIS . V.P APH REC

THE APH HAD BEEN KIND TO ME . IN REACT

THIS A SPCIAL PERSNAL WORK.
DADICATED TO APH

FROM

MAY 27th

Mohammed T. Bellow
PO Box 6850 Jeddah 21425
KSA
E.M. (OSAMA NOOH) Internet
/ RN.8135@ROSE.COM
D/ Mr. Bellow

MEAL SERVICE CARE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND CHILDREN AT HOSPITALS

Written By: Towfik Bellow

Edited By: Colin E. Ogle & G. Shocklee

DATE :May 19, 1995

TEXT FROM THE HOLY QURAN

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

أفلم يسيروا في الأرض فتكون لهم

قلوب يعقلون بها أو أذان يسمعون

بها فانها لا تعمى الأبصار ولكن

تعمى القلوب التي في الصدور

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE COMPASSIONATE THE MERCIFUL .

((Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) May thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear ?
Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts.))

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I. Introduction

A. Forward :

Since becoming visually impaired some years ago, I have started an on-going public awareness campaign through newspaper articles about my case and the need to provide better services for low-vision sufferers in the Kingdom. One such article (printed in the Arab News, written by Mr. Basheer on November 26, 1994) focused on the concept of "Meals For The Blind." This article drew the attention of Mr. Mirza Baig, director of food and nutrition services at King Khaled Eye Specialist Hospital (KKESH) in Riyadh.

Rehabilitation for the blind needed

Does being blind mean total dependancy on others in life? Not if the blind are given a chance to be productive members of society. Independence can always be achieved if there is a strong will, reports
Abdul Wahab Bashir

JEDDAH, Nov. 26 — Despite the efforts being made at both public and private levels to cater for handicapped persons in the Kingdom, visually impaired persons complain of the lack of specialized rehabilitation services that could help them integrate into the society and lead an active life.

The case of Muhammad Tawfik Bellow, a young Saudi who experienced a steady deterioration in his eyesight over the years while working as a flight attendant and instructor, is one of many similar examples justifying the need for specialized rehabilitation centers for the visually impaired.

"Such centers will help people who become visually disabled due to an accident, illness, old age or heredity learn to be independent again," he said.

Bellow, 33, who started facing difficulties in adjusting from light to dark six years ago when he was working as an in-flight chef for Saudia, the Kingdom's national carrier, appealed to businessmen and government officials to consider his proposal. He wants the center to be located in Jeddah. Bellow's case was diagnosed as retinitis pigmentosa.

He was told that, physically, he was not qualified to continue working as cabin crew member and was given a job at the corporation flight attendant training center.

In Oct. 1992 his services were discontinued.

Muhammad Tawfik Bellow

The decision came as a shock to Bellow who until his retirement continued to be an active productive employee.

That same year he helped Saudia win three prestigious international awards by initiating a "meals for the blind" project offering special meal service for blind airline passengers.

"I feel my case had been mishandled," said bellow who at first strongly opposed his early retirement but said he was forced to sign his retirement papers under financial pressures.

"Not only are the handicapped facing difficulties trying to become productive members of the society, their daily life is further complicated by the fact that city planners and architects of public buildings like hospitals, schools and shopping centers do not bother to take into consideration the needs of the physically impaired."

There are numerous government and private specialist eye hospitals and clinics in the Kingdom but the lack of specialized rehabilitation centers for the visually impaired is evident and Bellow wants to see more of these institutions.

According to figures by the World Health Organization (WHO) there are about 140,000 blind people in the Kingdom.

Bellow further complains that blind people lack the necessary aiding devices, specially those relating to reading, general literature and rehabilitation material.

Children and women suffer most from their disability.

"The society views the handicapped as a person who can be of no use to himself or others and who only needs to be taken care of at all times. In fact, this isn't the case" said Bellow whose elder sister and younger brother suffer from the same affliction.

Bellow's proposal for the establishment of a rehabilitation center for the visually impaired was motivated by the lack of information, counseling and training facilities for victims of this type of disability.

The center should provide mobility and orientation training to enable people suffering from low vision and blindness benefit from modern technological equipment for reading and writing.

Its members will enjoy group and individual counseling, work sight instruction and counseling or employers on how to assist their employees with vision disability and a shop which sells aids, games, equipment and other devices.

Bellow hopes his scheme would receive positive response from government officials and the business community in the country.

"We can gather resources and put our individual contributions together to come up with a much-needed and beneficial service to our community."

During a recent trip to the United States Bellow visited the American Printing House for the Blind (APH).

Over the past months has been in constant touch with the World Blind Union (WBU) through correspondence.

He said he would like blind people in the Kingdom to benefit from the advanced equipment available in other countries such as those developed by (APH).

APH has entered the electronic textbook market with Text2000, a software program designed to operate MS-DOS compatible computers allowing students to read textbooks with their adaptive devices.

One of its most important features is that it allows visually impaired students to keep pace in a mainstream classroom and search the book for any word or string of characters.

There is also the PC Typer, an MS-DOS based program designed to help visually impaired students develop their keyboarding skills and increase their speed and accuracy.

After Mr. Baig became aware that I was visually impaired, as well as a principal person in developing "Meals For The Blind" for Saudia Airlines, he personally invited me to visit KKESH and observe the Food Services Program of their hospital. In January 1995, I made the visit to KKESH where I was also to conduct a tour of its kitchen's food preparation.

During the tour, I noticed a young man being obliged to feed his father who had patches over both eyes having undergone eye surgery. Though the father wasn't / isn't blind, he was in a blind position. At the same time, my son was hospitalized for ten days in a different hospital for an open-heart surgery operation. My son also experienced similar problem with being unable to eat independently or easily.

Kitchen tour at KKESH.

Both of these observations and experiences heightened my awareness as well as drew my attention towards meal service in hospitals, and led to the following questions.

- Should hospitals (KKESH being an example) serve patients who have had eye operations the same meals service as sighted patients, also should hospitals serve a child patient like an adult patient?

- Why do in-patients and their sitters prefer food from outside, even though the hospital provides three well-portioned meals?

- Does being in the hospitals mean that you do not deserve an enjoyable and needs-oriented meal service ?

B. AIMS & OBJECTIVES :

- **Call the attention of hospitals to the "special food service needs" of visually impaired and children in-patients.**

- **Apply the concept of "Meals for The Blind" in all hospitals food services.**

This report shall :

- **Review and expand upon the importance of "Meals for The Blind".**

- **Spread public awareness towards food services for the visually impaired.**

- **Explore the application of the concept of "Meals for The Blind" in both the public and private sectors.**

saudia السعودية
SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES الخطوط العربية السعودية

ATTN: MR. MANSOUR AL HUSSEINI

TO : SPLCST. SYST. DIN/CMY. POLICY INSP.& CONTROL

FROM : INSTRUCTOR IFS TRAINING

DATE : 15/09/1412 G, - 18/03/1992

SUBJ : SPECIAL BLIND MEALS:

ALsalam Alaykum, ..

May Allah accept your fasting and bless your coming Eid.

Upon my observations of the new procedure for patients special meals, I have noticed that blind passengers were not accounted for. I would like to take this opportunity to suggest a special meal for blind passengers to be part of Saudia's special meals list.

Following is a summary of the proposal;

In order to accomodate a blind passenger traveling on Saudia, we should provide him/her with a special tray set-up as well as bite-size meal portioning plan. This will eliminate the need for using a knife, which in turn provides ease of eating the meal, as well as helping to avoid accidents with the meal tray.

Conclusion - by providing for the blind passenger Saudia will be offering another service for our customers needs.

I leave this to your further handling, and would appreciate being able to participate in the developong of these meal and service plans.

Best regards.

MOHAMED TAWFIG BELLOW

cc:
G.M. IFS Trng.& Admn.
Mgr. IFS Trng.
Mgr. IFS Proc:
Asst. Mgr. IFS Trng.
Sen. Instr. IFS Trng.

0076

II. Meals For The Blinds

At this point, allow me to provide some background on how the concept of "Meals For The Blind" came to be developed and subsequently utilized by Saudia Airlines.

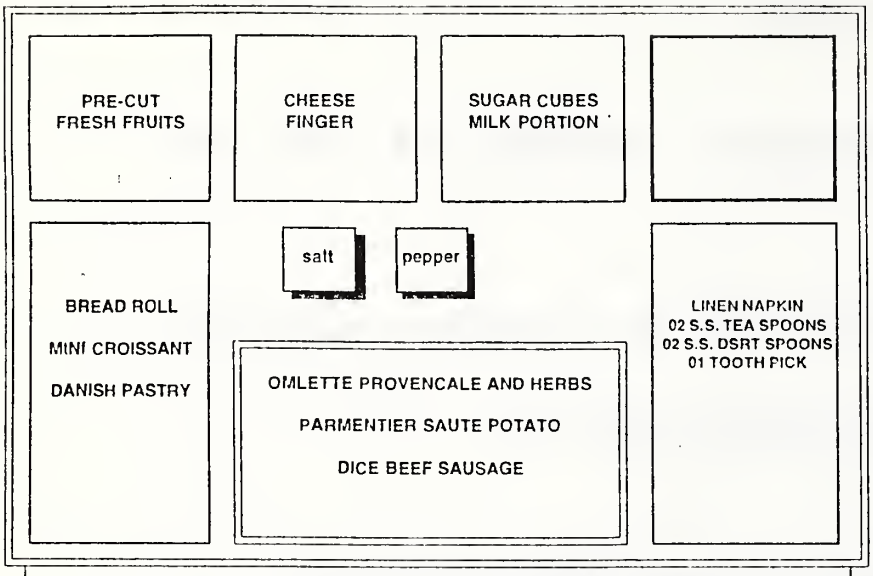
History and Background :

After proposing a special meal service for blind passengers, I went with a group of specialists from Saudia's Dining Services to the Light Institute in Makkah to discuss the idea with blind students and their teachers, and get their suggestions. We were able to identify the following problems regarding meal services for blind passengers :

- **Unreadable menus.**
- **Frequent droppage / spillage of food on clothing.**
- **Difficulty / inability in opening packaged foods such as butter, jam, etc.**
- **Salt and pepper are not differentiated.**
- **Difficulty in handling standard cuts of meat, fish, chicken.**
- **Inability to pick up certain food items with utensils.**

We addressed these "unique" problems by developing the following solutions - which Saudia subsequently implemented in their Airline's blind passenger food service.

Saudi Gears Meals Toward Blind Passengers



Being consistent in the way Saudi prepares the tray layout, the hot breakfast tray in economy class makes it easier for the blind passenger to be served.

Continued From Page 17

economy class and the small napkin is not enough to alleviate droppage/spillage

* Utensils are often sharp and could cause injury
* Portion packs of butter, salad dressing, etc. can not be opened
* Salt and pepper can not be differentiated.

Problems were also encountered with food items, including:

* Standard cuts of meat and fish with/without bone can not be cut and handled
* Excess sauces caused spillage
* Some items could not be picked up with ease by the utensils--for example, sliced cucumber.

Solutions developed for the equipment included:

* Developing a Braille Menu in English and Arabic not only offering the menu, but defining the position on the tray of each component utilizing the clock concept
* Supplying the economy class passenger with the large first class linen napkin
* Supplying only spoons in various sizes to utilize with individual dishes
* Do away with portion packs and either pre-prepare food by marination/spicing or develop an extra service on instruction to the inflight service attendant in the galley as in other special meal concept
* Salt and pepper shakers are defined by braille printing on the side of each.

The following steps were taken with food items:

* Components in fruit salad are produced in chunks--not slices
* Components in salad are presented in balon form and using, wherever possible, cucumber to generate moisture and by keeping cherry tomatoes to a candy bit size, making them a finger food
* Hors d'oeuvres are pre-cut to be used either by n spoon or as finger food
* The main meat/fish dinners are marinated and produced in bite size portions, always without the bone
* Dessert is produced in convenient manner as either cookies for finger feeding or mousse-type dishes
* Cheeses are individually sliced to mouth size bites
* Cold beverages are supplied in Tetra Pack with a straw inserted by a flight attendant or in an easy peel cup
* Coffee and cream are dispensed normally,but cubed sugar is on the tray set up
* Bakery items with jam or honey are not served, but replaced by a correctly garnished Danish
* Croissants are produced already flavored and in mini size.

Saudia has registered the new concept with both IFCA and IFSA, issuing the new code BDLM (Meals for the Blind). This was also registered in the Airline Reservation System (SARS).

An added feature for the BDLM program is having on board special braille magazines for the blind passenger to read during the trip.

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Saudi Gears Meals Toward Blind Passengers

Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) after receiving information from sales agents and their own inflight service crews that a significant number of blind people were traveling on their airlines for treatment, seminars, education, and vacations, set up a meal program to make food service easier for them.

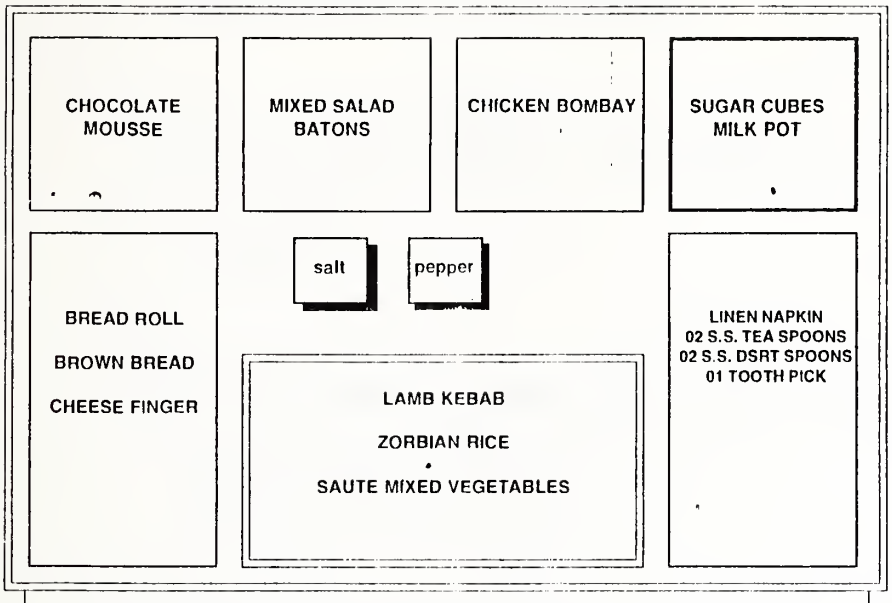
Because standard menus and equipment were causing blind people embarrassment and they could not eat at ease or without attention from the inflight crew, a committee was developed to study the problem.

The committee worked in close conjunction with the Bahrain Blind Institute (M.E.H.Q.), Al Nour Blind Institute in Riyadh, Makkah Blind Institute, and Al-Fajer for Braille Publications. They analyzed the problems encountered by over 7,000 blind people who traveled Saudia each year. First they discovered that 97 percent were traveling in economy class, thus not receiving special attention for the inflight service crew.

Problems encountered with the equipment used by blind people included:

* Standard menus were unreadable and had to be explained by inflight crew
* The positioning of the various items on the tray are unknown
* The majority of travelers are in

Continued on Page 18



The new tray set up, illustrated by the hot lunch/dinner tray in economy class, has been designed to make it easier for the blind passenger to enjoy his/her meal.

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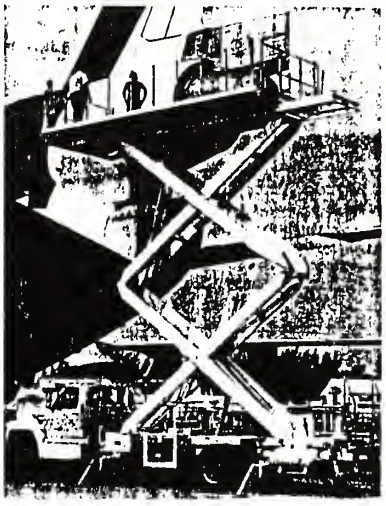

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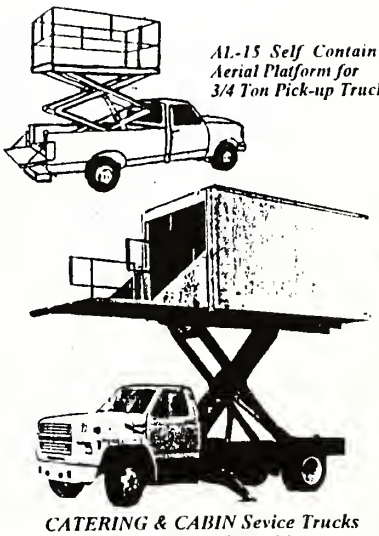

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- **Provided blind passengers with a large linen napkin.**

- **Provided spoons in various sizes to use with individual dishes.**

- **Eliminated portion-packs and either pre - prepare food or develop an extra service on passenger request.**

- **Salt and pepper shakers were defined by braille printing.**

- **Served fruits and cheese in bite-sizes, salads in baton form, main courses in bite-size portions, bakery items in mini-sizes, and desserts as finger foods or mousse-type dishes .**

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International Flight Catering Association

Jons Hensel

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1077 BM Amsterdam
The Netherlands

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SAUDIA'S IFCA TRIUMPH IS MERCURY MIDDLE EAST "FIRST"

Saudia was today named overall winner of the Mercury Award, the inflight catering world's most prestigious annual awards programme. It is the first time in the 11 years that the competition has been running that a Middle East airline has won outright. The company's winning entry was a meal concept specially designed to answer the needs of more than 7000 blind passengers who travel with the airline every year.

Announcing the results of the 1992 Mercury Awards at IFCA's annual convention in Amsterdam, Mercury Committee chairman Jons Hensel described Saudia's meals for the blind passengers as showing "fantastic commitment to the complexity of the individual needs of blind passengers. Such a simple and well thought-out solution for this important segment of passengers made it a really outstanding entry."

In its entry, Saudia pointed out that 97 per cent of all its blind passengers travelled in economy class, and would thus be less likely to receive special assistance from inflight service personnel. In conjunction with leading Arab-world and international institutes for the blind, Saudia developed a complete package covering braille menus, special food and equipment so that blind passengers would be able to handle the whole meal service confidently and independently.

The Mercury Award, which this year attracted a record 55 entries, comprises six categories altogether, and is based on concepts put into action during 1992. It looks for innovation, quality and value for money not only in food, but in services and equipment, with the final criterion being improved service to the passenger. Entries are received from across the entire inflight services industry, including airlines, inflight caterers, equipment manufacturers and product suppliers.

Other medal winners this year in the various categories were Lufthansa German Airlines for new and tougher recyclable tableware, SAS Service Partner for an automated flight kitchen, portion packed coulis desserts from Forte Airport Services, and a first class restaurant meal service in Lauda Air's Amadeus Class from Do & Co.

Amsterdam, February 19, 1993

AIRLINE SHIP & CATERING
ONBOARD SERVICES
MAGAZINE

March 15, 1993

Gregory Cowell
Saudi Arabian Airlines
P.O. Box 9178
Jeddah, 21413
Saudi Arabia

Dear Mr. Cowell:

I am very pleased to advise that SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES has received an award in the ONBOARD SERVICE AWARD COMPETITION.

The FOOD SERVICE AWARD: For its photographs and presentation on Meals for the Blind.

The awards will be presented prior to the Inflight Food Service Conference at the Chaine Des Rotisseurs Dinner. The dinner will be held at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, 300 Bourbon Street, New Orleans, LA on Saturday May 1st, 1993 at 18:00 hour.

Please accept my sincere congratulations and let me know who will be accepting the award and how many people from your airline will be attending the dinner. Please RSVP no later than April 1st, 1993.

Congratulations once again on an outstanding award presentation.

Sincerely,

Alex C. Morton
Publisher

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III. Hospitals View

You might be wondering what exactly the concept of "Meals For The Blind" has to do with hospitals. It has a direct and important relationship with the food services of all hospitals, especially when you consider these facts :

- **Hospitals are obliged to serve food to an extremely wide range of patients such as the very young, the very old, patients with digestive ailments and of course, low vision and blind patients.**

- **Food is essential and vital to recovery from illness, well- being and a positive psycho-logical state.**

Interviewing Mr. Baig at KKESH

Comment on "Meal for The Blind"

A. Explore Meals for The Blind :

When asked to comment on "Meals For The Blind" Mr. Baig from KKESH stated : It has remarkable solutions to complex problems of accommodating the needs of the blind, yet the ideas can only be conceived by a visually impaired person who faces difficulties in his daily affairs.

When asked where he thinks "meals" should be applied, and how hospitals can benefit from this concept, Mr. Baig stated, "no doubt it's obvious application is for the blind, but the ideas suit equally well other physically handicapped people, chronically ill and whomever needs assistance from others, including the elderly and very young children.

Interviewing Mr. Baig at KKESH

How can hospitals benefit from "Meals for The Blind" ?

Many patients need assistance to do the most simple task like eating their meals. If the patients family is not available, a staff nurse has to spend her valuable time tending to the patients meal service. With the blind meal, patients, either children or adults, can feel independent to enjoy their meal at their own pace and not require assistance."

Mr. Baig worked in hospital food services management in the United States since 1978. For over 10 years he was Director of Food and Nutrition Services in several hospitals in Chicago and New York City. He has been at KKESH since September 1993.

Children Meal Service at Hospitals

Sondus having dinner service in KFSH

B. Children meal Service :

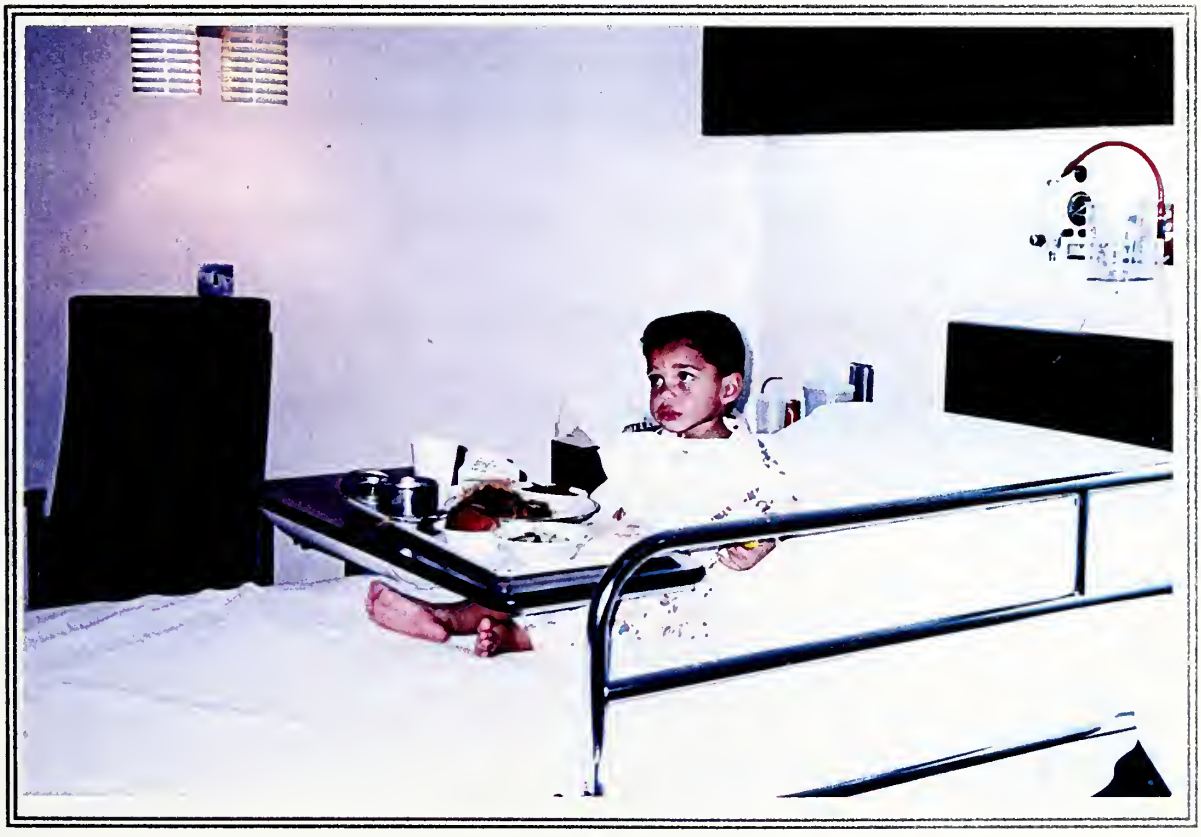
My wife, G. Shocklee, recently stayed in the hospital with our 2-year old son. Following are her comments on the meal services : "In Jan. 1995, I spent 5 days in King Faisal Specialist Hospital, Riyadh when my 2-year old son, Sondus Bellow, underwent open-heart surgery. After 24 hours in intensive care, he was transferred to the children's ward - and basically placed into my care. The first two days he was allowed pureed foods and 1000 ml of liquids. From then on he was not limited on food intake. The meals were basically the same for me (the sitter) as for the patient (a 2-year old). Breakfast was either scrambled eggs or beans. Lunch and dinner were always served in

portions which had to be cut up - either lamb chops, roasted chicken, baked chicken, or one-inch chunks of beef. The bones and fat were not removed. The dessert was usually a piece of fruit - not peeled nor cut up. Also, the cutlery for my son was the same as mine - too big for his little hands and mouth, with the knife left on the tray.

We ended up bringing food he liked from outside - chicken nuggets, French fries, pizza, milkshakes, and pudding. The hospital menu did not cater to a young child's tastes. Nor was it thoughtful of a sick child's inability to chew and cut up the food. I wish the hospitals would provide a children's menu."

Another recent case was Mr. Mansour Al-Hussaini, Saudia Airlines Specialist Dining and Commissary Services (also executive and planner for "Meals For The Blind"). "I recently accompanied my 3-year old son to Dr. Sulaiman Fageeh Hospital in Jeddah. He was having a high fever due to a throat infection. We arrived at 6 pm. - dinner was being served as we got to our room. At that time, no one was hungry. Having seen what was provided by the hospital, my family asked me to bring them food from McDonald's at 11 pm. The problems I have experienced with hospital meals service were :

Meals For The Blind Concept Will Improve Children's Food Service at Hospitals



- **no difference between the patient and sitters meal.**
- **no difference between adult / child.**
- **tasteless / poor presentation.**
- **inconvenient timing of service.**

I feel "Meals For The Blind" can benefit all hospitals because there will always be patients who are very young or old, or with an injured hand, or an eye operation, or just depressed." Said Mr. Al Hussaini.

IV. Expanding Meals For The Blind :

If you were now to consider the facts, the questions I have posed, and the cases stated, I think you will begin to see their commonalties with regards to the need for hospitals as well as other public establishments to develop specially designed food services that cater to the needs of each individual patient or customer.

"Meals For The Blind" can be beneficial to over 140,000 blind people throughout the Kingdom - by helping to reduce their dependency on others when they are having to stay in hospital as well as thousands of children who stay in hospitals.

Meals Service Care For Visually Impaired :

The original "Meals For The Blind" concept was intended for blind passengers traveling on Saudia Airlines.

In order to expand this concept to make it also beneficial to low-vision person as well as children, plus to implement it throughout public facilities (starting with hospitals) the following should be included :

- **New name - VIP's food services (Visually Impaired Persons)**

- **Introduce "VIP's food service" concept to hospitals kingdom.**

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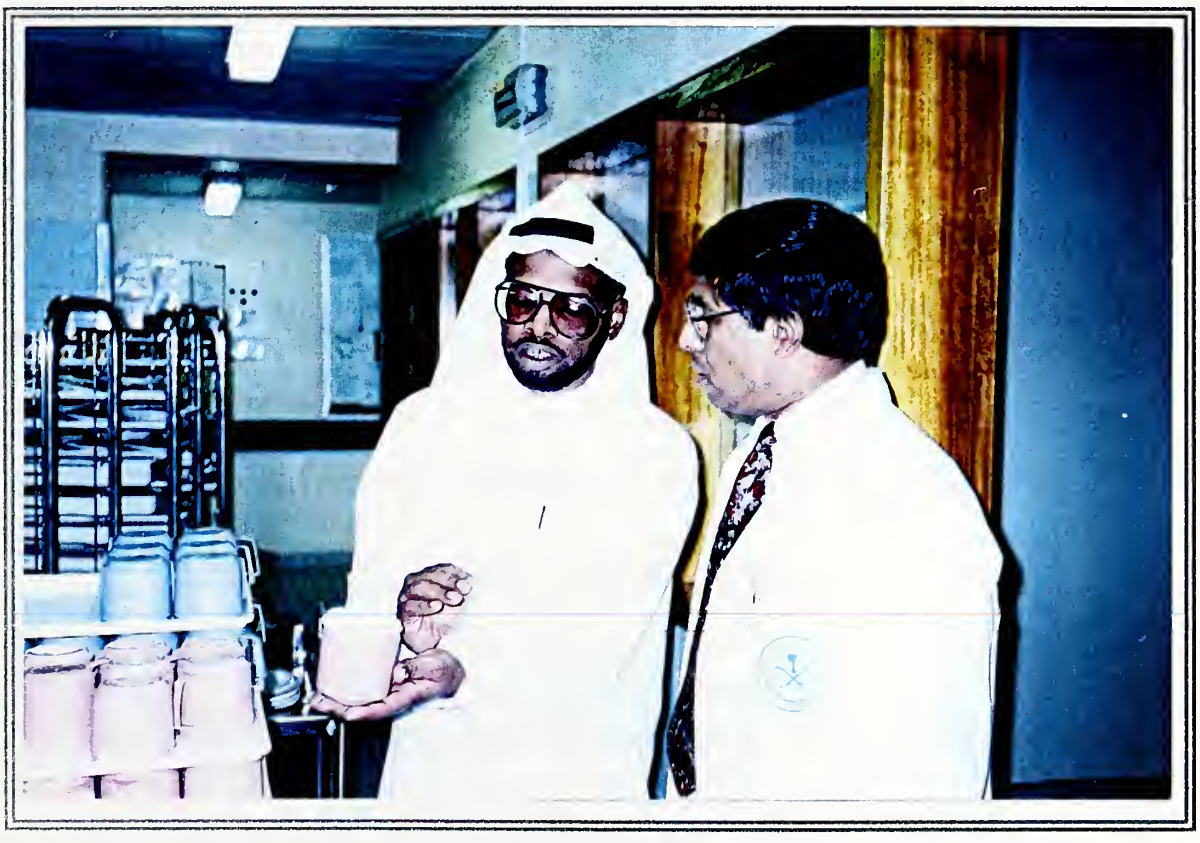
Color Contrast Beneficial Visually Impaired People



- **The new concept will include all of Meals For The Blind attributes plus the following:**

    1. **Enhance smell of foods because VIPs have a more developed sense of smell compared to sighted persons.**

    2. **Add to the braille menu a black and white / large-print section for persons whose vision dose not allow them to read normal size print.**

    3. **Implement color contrasting in tray set-up and food presentation.**

    4. **Set up special seminars for training the staff who will be serving VIPs their meals.**